

This is something the President has wanted. He talks about it all the time. We have done our best for him, and we will keep everyone advised of our progress.

We are going to do our very best to finish this next work period. I am confident it may take a little bit of time that people do not want to spend, but we are going to have to do that because it is too important not to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Washington State.

RISING PRICE OF GASOLINE

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I rise this morning to talk about the ever-increasing problem and crisis we have in this country with the rising price of gasoline.

Many of my colleagues saw that yesterday oil futures hit \$140 a barrel; I think today it is up to \$141 a barrel. The stock market, I think, is responding to the anxieties that oil costs are causing to our economy and the future prospects of some people speculating it might even be going up to \$150 or \$200 a barrel. This is a problem for us and a problem that this body needs to address and needs to address quickly.

Many people at home are understanding—because at almost \$4.30, whatever people are paying for gasoline across the country, in Washington State we seem to pay a higher price than the Nation, on average—are starting to understand what the oil futures market is and how much speculation is happening.

But we can see today that on world consumption, there are about 86 million barrels of oil a day that are consumed. But what people might find surprising is that the volume of that oil traded back and forth on a daily basis is over 1 billion barrels per day.

So we produce 86 million, but yet we trade it over and over and over again. In fact, 14 times we trade and sell one barrel of this oil back and forth every day. Many of my colleagues and myself have concerns about the fact that much of this trading, at least this chunk of it, done on the Intercontinental Exchange is done in a dark market. So we do not know what kinds of positions people hold, we do not have the same requirements for excessive trading that we do on NYMEX and on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange.

So we have a lot of anxiety that there is a lot of trading going on in the dark that people do not understand and that this situation, while we are out on recess, could be exacerbated; that we could have a grave problem while we are seeing this continue to shoot up.

A few weeks ago, we had the price shoot up \$10 in 1 day. So my colleagues in the House responded to this, knowing it is an emergency situation. In fact, 402 House Members recognized this is an emergency situation, passed legislation yesterday that was brought to the floor, not a lot of discussion or

debate. There have been many hearings, but the decision was made, because we are leaving, to bring up this emergency declaration to say to the CFTC that they should use their emergency authority to make sure they are cracking down on any excessive speculation in all markets, including those that currently have loopholes, such as the Foreign Boards of Trade, such as ICE, those exempt electronic markets and any exempt swaps and bilateral energy trading.

That is what 402 of our House colleagues said, is that they believe it is an emergency and that the CFTC should use its emergency authority and use that authority to make sure that excessive speculation is investigated, that they demand that people reduce position limits, that they have overall stricter position limits, and that they be aggressive while we are gone on recess.

So while we are taking a holiday, there is no holiday for consumers from higher gas prices. But one thing we can do is make sure the chief agency in charge of policing these oil markets uses its emergency authority while we are gone to do everything they can to protect consumers.

I think this is important legislation. And the fact that 402 of our colleagues also agreed in the House of Representatives, led by Representative CHRIS VAN HOLLEN and Representative BART STUPAK, it is time we do the same thing.

As I said, they did not have a lot of time to discuss this, they were all in agreement that this is an emergency situation, and we should make sure the CFTC uses that emergency authority.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 6377

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of this House bill, H.R. 6377, the Energy Markets Emergency Act, which was received from the House; the bill be read three times and passed; and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. SESSIONS. Reserving the right to object. Would the Senator amend the unanimous consent request, that this legislation be the first order of business following disposition of the FISA legislation and that the first amendment in order be a McConnell amendment, which is the text of S. 3202, the Gas Price Reduction Act?

Ms. CANTWELL. I do not agree to the modification of my request.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I object on behalf of the leaders on this side.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I am obviously disappointed that my colleague on the other side of the aisle is objecting to this request because this legislation passed by us could go to the President's desk, and we would be sending a very strong message today, that

while we are gone, this is a serious crisis, and we expect the Federal regulator, the policeman on the beat, to be doing their job while we are gone.

We have tried to say to this agency that they should be more aggressive. We have pushed them with letters; we have pushed them with oversight hearings. But now we have our colleagues in the House of Representatives saying: You shall use your emergency authority.

It is disappointing that even though 402 Members, a majority of Republicans and a majority of Democrats—I think only 19 people did not vote in favor of this particular measure—that over 400 Members thought this was such an emergency that we should take this action.

It is very unfortunate that while we are going on holiday, our consumers are not going to have a holiday from high gas prices and will not have the protections and the indication that we have said is critical to making sure oil markets are properly policed and that we do not continue to see this rising and huge increase in gas prices while we are gone.

I am very disappointed in the objection and will continue to fight this issue to make sure our consumers are protected by the Federal agencies that are supposed to be doing their job in protecting them from excessive speculation and manipulation.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

WAIVING SANCTIONS ON NORTH KOREA

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I wish to speak to the body about an announcement made by the administration yesterday that is probably best captured on the front page of the Washington Times: “‘Axis of evil’ member to be scratched from list.” These are the announcements of the administration policy of what they are going to take that was announced yesterday regarding North Korea.

I believe the administration's announcement yesterday about lifting sanctions on North Korea and removing it from the list of state sponsors of terrorism is shocking, is sad, and it belies the facts. I say “shocking” because of the extent to which we have allowed Kim Jung Il to manipulate the situations and the negotiations. I know some are calling this a victory, but I want us to just review what has taken place and the facts on the ground and the facts in North Korea and the facts for the North Korean people.

I have spoken several times on this floor about North Korea, about its abysmal record of human rights, about the gulag system that is taking place, about 10 percent of its population being killed over the last 15 years through either starvation, deprivation, or the gulag system. When this place finally opens up, we are going to see a level of depravity that is going to rival some of the worst situations we have seen in the last 50 years. Yet now we are removing them from the state sponsor of terrorism list, we are lifting sanctions on them for their nuclear explosions, and we are saying: OK, it is going to be brought into the normal group of nations.

I wish to talk about factually what we know is taking place today in North Korea and ask my colleagues to ask themselves: Is this something we really should be doing? Does this really factually address what the situation is today in North Korea?

North Korea sent the Chinese a declaration that is 6 months late on their nuclear involvement. It does not include any information on uranium enrichment. It has nothing on the secret, illegal nuclear reactor exported to Syria that was bombed a year and a half ago by the Israelis, and it has no indication on the number of nuclear weapons North Korea produced. That is what is missing.

I will talk about what we have done, and yet we do not have that base of information about which I just spoke. In return for this paltry and, frankly, I think insulting lack of information handed over by Kim Jung Il—and I hesitate to call this a declaration for its severe deficiencies—our Government is legitimizing this regime by waiving the Trading With the Enemy Act and removing it from the list of state sponsors of terrorism.

I have heard the argument that these sanctions are only symbolic and that there are many more sanctions still in place to continue the isolation. But let me show you what the State Department gave me on this very subject yesterday.

As shown on this chart, this is the list of sanctions that remain, and they list on it the Glenn amendment sanctions, which I remind the body is a set of mandatory sanctions, that if you use or detonate a nuclear device, these sanctions automatically go on you. They are listed as sanctions being maintained, and yet yesterday this body, in the supplemental, provided the administration with waiver authority on Glenn amendment sanctions toward North Korea. This was something lobbied for heavily by the State Department and this administration. So we cannot say those sanctions are still in place when the administration now has the authority to waive those as well because of lobbying in this body.

We may recall last month when the State Department came to the Hill and lobbied intensively for Congress to waive these Glenn amendment sanc-

tions. I heard about how important it was to give the Department a waiver to carry out disablement and dismantlement. Then that waiver was included in the supplemental without any Senate hearings on the matter. There were no Senate hearings on waiving Glenn amendment sanctions toward North Korea. When the State Department says not to worry, I have very little reason to feel comforted by their assurances that there are plenty more sanctions on the books when they worked hard to lift these very sanctions.

Another point on delisting: What does this say to the other state sponsors of terrorism? It tells President Bashir of Sudan or Castro from Cuba that the way to get off the list is to go out and start a nuclear program and then bargain it away in exchange for getting delisted.

Does anyone really believe North Korea should be removed from this list? That is the pointed question I would like to ask Members of this body and the administration. Does anybody really believe North Korea should actually be taken off the state sponsor of terrorism list when they provided missile technology to Iran, a nuclear reactor to Syria, funding of any number of groups—I want to back off of that statement. I want to only state ones that are obvious and well known. While Iran remains the most active state sponsor of terrorism, North Korea is the only one as far as I know that has built a secret nuclear reactor for a fellow member of this malicious group.

On top of that, the CRS report from just a few months ago provides ample evidence of significant North Korean assistance to terrorist groups. There are reports that North Korea sent trainers and advisers to southern Lebanon to help Hezbollah build tunnels. Other sources say they provided materials for the rockets fired into Israel.

The other piece, as I mentioned, is that today's announcement is saddening. I say saddening because no progress was made on human rights despite all the concessions we handed over, no progress made on human rights in spite of 10 percent of the population being killed in the last 15 years in North Korea. No progress made on human rights—not a part of the agreement, not a part of delisting them, not a part even of the specific items listed by the President that must be done for North Korea to gain its way back into a reasonable relationship with other nations. Despite all the concessions we handed over, there has been no progress at all. We have no assurance that any will be made going forward in this process.

Let me read what the President said about what North Korea must do to end its isolation. This is what the President said yesterday morning:

To end its isolation, North Korea must address these concerns. It must dismantle all of its nuclear facilities, give up its separated plutonium, resolve outstanding questions on its highly enriched uranium and prolifera-

tion activities, and end these activities in a way that we can fully verify.

What about shutting down the concentration camps?

I want to show a picture from Google Earth, so anybody can go and see these. This is Camp 22. If you would like to spot it on Google Earth, these are blown up from Google Earth. The administration probably has a little better resolution on some pictures they have. This is one of the most notorious gulag prison camps in the world. It is in North Korea. Once you go into Camp 22, you do not come out. Nobody has come out of this camp alive. This exists in North Korea today. It continues to exist. Nobody in the administration or elsewhere is calling for it to be shut down. Yet we are going to take them off the state sponsor of terrorism list—while people go in and never come out of this place. Does this sound familiar? Have we heard this story before? Have we heard it before in any dealings with other regimes?

Let me show you a few other pictures of this place from Google Earth. Anyone can go and look at it yourself. Here are some of the barracks at Camp 22. It is a large place. It is larger than the city of Los Angeles area-wise, with big mining operations, timber operations where they work people to death. Shown in the picture are some of the barracks of this place. You have fencing, guard posts, the road coming in, the road going to a coal mine where people die mining for coal.

This is a picture of some people—there is not much resolution, again, on that—people probably just going in, never to come out. If we stand here in a couple years, after this regime is no longer in power or it opens up, and we start to get the data and we start to get the evidence and we start to find the bodies and get the body count of how many people died here, I want you to remember this picture. We saw it.

We have done this before where we have said: OK, well, yes, we think there may be something going on, but we are not sure about it, and plus it is more important that we just deal with this specific issue of plutonium and forget these people and them dying, when we have it in our power to negotiate this and say: No, we are not going to take you off this terrorism list until you do something on human rights, until you close down this camp and highlight that piece of it instead of just having this narrow piece, and then this is the way forward to deal with and delegitimize the regime and stop getting the people killed.

The weapon of mass destruction is Kim Jung Il, and what he is doing it on right now is his own people, and we know it.

As I have noted before, Google Earth has made a witness of us all. These images are available to anyone and everyone with an Internet connection.

What about the starvation policy of the regime? What about the kids who are starving in the regime? Let me

show you a picture. I do not have this one blown up. It is a picture of orphans looking out of an orphanage. You can see their emaciated bodies. The German physician, a few years back, who was going around and treating some people in North Korea snuck out pictures very similar to this—not very happy. What about the thousands of refugees who flee to China, many of whom are trafficked into the sex slave trade, while others get repatriated back to North Korea by Chinese authorities to face torture, execution, or a trip to Camp 22? These are issues that by law must be addressed in these negotiations under the North Korean Human Rights Act, signed under this administration, which declares it so.

Furthermore, does anyone really believe we can trust Kim Jung Il to be truthful with these declarations that he is handing us when he has no qualms about treating his own citizens in such a barbaric way? There is a report in the Washington Post that the documents he handed over to us about plutonium and their plutonium plant actually had traces of uranium on the very documents themselves—on the documents.

So while we are dealing with plutonium and we are delisting them as a State sponsor of terrorism, the documents they hand over to verify this have traces of uranium on the documents. Is that mind boggling? We are saying we are going to delist you because you dealt with plutonium, but we are not going to require anything on uranium and we are going to waive the Glenn amendment, push the Congress to waive the Glenn amendment for you detonating a nuclear device, when you built a nuclear reactor in another state-sponsored terrorism country of Syria. We are not going to require anything on that, and we are going to waive these sanctions of Trading with the Enemy Act when you are giving missile technology to Iran which has missiles pointed at Israel and other allies of ours in that region and possibly, in the future, to have range to the United States.

I am stunned. The things we are saying and doing are absolutely counter to the facts on the ground.

I am happy we are dealing with plutonium, but for what we are giving up—“axis of evil” member to be scratched from the list”—and we don’t have anything on uranium. We don’t have anything on human rights. We don’t have anything on missile technology being shipped out to Iran, of all places; we don’t have anything on the nuclear reactor that was built in Syria, and we are going to waive all of these things? Meanwhile, the people die.

This seems like a very bad deal to me, but that is not the biggest reason I am mad. The biggest reason I am mad is because of people still getting killed and we end up with blood on our hands when we have the chance to be able to deal with this differently.

I hope we will start to take into consideration this picture of these or-

phans. I hope we start to take into consideration uranium and what is happening in Iran, what is happening in Syria, and that we don’t invite North Korea back into the fair standing of countries with what they continue to do.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WEBB). Without objection, it is so ordered.

DELAY OF IRAQI PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, last February, the Iraqi Government set October 1, 2008, as the date for provincial elections to occur. These elections are critical to U.S. and Iraqi efforts to bring about reconciliation in their country. For instance, those elections will give members of the Sunni community, many of whom did participate in the previous rounds of provincial elections, a chance to vote for fair representation in Iraqi’s provincial councils. Unfortunately, the provincial elections law, which is the enabling legislation needed for these elections to take place, remains stalled in the Iraqi Council of Representatives and will likely delay provincial elections by at least several months.

The administration’s silence on the Iraqi Government’s failure to adopt election laws that were promised in February—and which set a date of October 1 for those elections—is disturbing, and it is the exact wrong way to send a message to the Iraqi leaders. Many of us have tried repeatedly to get this administration to shift responsibility to the Iraqi leaders for their own future, since there is a broad consensus that there is no military solution and only a political settlement among the Iraqis can end the conflict. The administration, however, has repeatedly missed opportunities to shift this burden to the Iraqis and appears willing to miss another opportunity.

President Bush indicated in February that he was confident that the Iraqi Government was “going to continue to work to make sure that their stated objective of getting provincial elections done by October of 2008 will happen.” And after meeting the Iraqi leaders in Baghdad in April, Secretary Rice said, “They know that provincial elections need to be held before October 1, as has been the announcement.” The administration is well aware that the failure of the Council of Representatives to pass a provincial elections law in the near future is likely to cause the previously established October 1 date for Iraqi provincial elections to be postponed.

The recent GAO report, entitled “Securing, Stabilizing and Rebuilding Iraq,” paints an even bleaker picture. According to that GAO report, it is likely to take 4 to 8 months to prepare for elections after a provincial election law is passed. That means that even if this law was passed next week, the October 1 deadline is unlikely to be met.

Ambassador Crocker said on April 10:

The way forward for a stable Iraq lies as much through successful elections, in my view, over the long term, as it does through the necessary application of force against those who resist the state.

Where is the pressure on the Iraqi Government to keep their commitment to an October election? Where is the administration’s message of disappointment? Iraqi leaders are likely to read the administration’s silence on their failure to act as a shrug of our shoulders.

We have made some security gains in Iraq, but progress is spotty on most political benchmarks set by the Iraqis for themselves, including provincial elections. The administration’s silence on this issue needs to end. It needs to make clear to the Iraqi Government that further delay in passing the provincial election law is totally unacceptable.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, on Friday, July 4, the United States will conduct the 232nd celebration of Independence Day. On this day, we commemorate the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Flags will fly and rousing music will be heard before the faint whiff of gunpowder and thunderous boom of fireworks reminds us of the great struggle that took place to set our Nation upon its course through history.

Amid all the parades, fireworks, and backyard barbecues, it is worthwhile to consider the document itself. The Declaration of Independence is an amazing and powerful manuscript. Phrases in its opening paragraphs are familiar to most Americans: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.” That line may well be the most recognizable sentence in American political history. It is certainly among the top 10.

As famous as the phrase “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness,” is, however, it is not the first sentence of